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Testimony
Representative James Maroney
119th District, Milford
February 2013

Chairman Harp, Chairman Walker, and Honorable members of the Appropriations Committee, I am here to testify in strong support of the funding of after school programs.

I am testifying before you today because it has come to my attention that a very important after school program in my district, WAVE, is in jeopardy of losing their funding. WAVE, the West Shore Achieves Visionary Education After-School program, is dependent on a partnership between Bridges, a community support agency, and the middle school in Milford. This is an extremely beneficial program that provides support for over 80 families.

With either one or both of their parents working, many of the children participating in the program would otherwise go home and be unsupervised. This program provides a structured, educational, and safe environment for these students between 2:35 and 5:30 every day. Research suggests that participation in after school programs such as the WAVE program can help lead to improved academic performance, social behaviors and relationships, and physical health (Mahoney, Vandell, Simkpkins, & Zarrett, 2009). In addition, the enrichment activities provide opportunities for these children they might not otherwise have. I have attached an article about a class in Origami that the participants of the WAVE program were able to attend.

We are all mindful of the budget considerations. However, programs such as this provide a significant return on investment in terms of the improved academic performance of the participants. The return of the WAVE program is further magnified by the fact that this is a partnership between the Milford Public Schools and Bridges, A Community Support Network, with additional funding provided by the state grant. Many of the schools at the forefront of education reform today, such as the KIPP Academy, utilize extended day programs or an extended day to help improve the academic performance of students.

I thank you for your consideration and I hope that you can see why this is such a valuable program.

Sincerely,
James Maroney